

My amendment would have prohibited the abusive practice of monopoly contracts, requiring the Administration to use contract vehicles that allow multiple contractors to compete for individual projects. That way we could have some competition between the companies at the project level—and competition is the best way to control costs.

Finally Mr. Chairman, my amendment would have required the Department to submit to appropriate congressional committees a list of all audits that find more than \$1 million in contractor overcharges, and to provide full copies of specific audits requested by the chairmen and ranking members of those committees. In this way, the amendment would have enhanced the ability of Congress to discover contractor abuses and promoting greater transparency.

Unfortunately, the current Administration has tried to hide contractor overcharges from Congress, international auditors, and the public, impeding oversight and diminishing accountability.

For example, for months the Defense Department refused to provide copies of audits completed by the Defense Contract Audit Agency relating to Halliburton's oilfield reconstruction work in Iraq. Slowly, we gained access to these reports through unofficial channels. The first report showed overcharges of more than \$100 million. We now have six of these audits, and the overcharges exceed \$212 million. To this day, we have still not received the remaining audits under this contract.

By refusing to allow a debate on the common sense changes proposed by my amendment, the Republican leadership in Congress is trying to bury these serious problems as well.

I will vote for this bill. I support our troops and this bill will enhance the safety of our men and women in uniform and improve their quality of life. But I am deeply concerned that Congress is not doing nearly enough to stop wasteful and unethical contracting practices.

INTRODUCING THE CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK MEDICARE EQUITY ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to join with my friend and colleague Rep. JIM LEACH (R-IA) to introduce the Clinical Social Work Medicare Equity Act of 2005. Sen. MIKULSKI is introducing the companion bill in the Senate. This simple, bipartisan bill would greatly improve access to mental health services for Medicare beneficiaries in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) by allowing clinical social workers to direct bill for their services.

This legislation seeks to correct a flaw in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 with respect to Medicare coverage of clinical social work services to nursing home residents. The law omits Certified Social Workers (CSWs) from a list of clinical professionals allowed to directly bill Medicare Part B for mental health services provided to Medicare beneficiaries in SNFs. As a result of this omission, Medicare beneficiaries in nursing homes often go without necessary mental health services.

Numerous reports suggest that mental illness is highly prevalent in nursing homes, with mental health problems affecting more than 80 percent of the residents. These mental disorders—including major depression, anxiety, and severe cognitive impairment of Alzheimer's disease—interfere with a person's ability to carry out activities of daily living. Furthermore, older people have the highest rate of suicide of any age group, accounting for 20 percent of all suicide deaths. Thus, access to mental health services for seniors in nursing homes is critically important.

Clinical social workers are highly trained mental health professionals and have been approved providers in the Medicare program since 1987. They provide 61 percent of mental health treatment in our country, and constitute the single largest group of mental health providers in the United States. Clinical social workers are also cost effective because they are paid less than Medicare's other mental health providers. They are reimbursed at 75 percent of the rate paid to psychologists.

Sadly, in many cases vulnerable nursing home residents have no access to mental health services when highly skilled CSWs are unable to bill Medicare Part B for services in SNFs. Rural and other medically underserved areas are particularly disadvantaged because psychiatrists and psychologists are often unavailable.

Before the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, clinical social workers were able to bill Medicare directly for providing mental health services to SNF residents, just like clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. Their current exclusion from this provider list is indefensible.

The ultimate victims of the current regulations are the vulnerable seniors who need mental health care. Mental health treatment works. Alzheimer's patients and their families can benefit enormously from psycho-education and counseling around how to cope and manage behavior problems. Research trials have repeatedly demonstrated that psychotherapy, either alone, or in combination with medication, can be effective in treating depression and debilitating anxiety.

The Clinical Social Work Medicare Equity Act of 2005 again makes it possible for CSWs to provide mental health services in skilled nursing facilities. This legislation helps to ensure access to needed mental health services for the many Medicare beneficiaries who reside in skilled nursing facilities. This bill is a small technical change to existing law, but would have the enormous effect of improving the lives of Medicare beneficiaries in nursing homes who are suffering from mental illness. We urge our colleagues to work with us to enact this important legislation this year.

MEMORIAL DAY TRIBUTE TO BRONX WAR HEROES

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are a constant reminder of the high cost of war. As they have done throughout America's history, selfless men and women continue to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We as Ameri-

cans may disagree on when, where, or if the country should go to war but we must all agree that the men and women who stand ready to sacrifice their lives for their Nation deserve nothing less than the respect and admiration of us all. As we commemorate the contributions of our fallen soldiers on this Memorial Day, I want to pay special tribute to Sergeant Cornelius Charlton and Private First Class William Thompson, two brave African American soldiers from the South Bronx who were posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for their outstanding service in the Korean War. The stories of these two soldiers are dramatic but largely unknown.

Sergeant Charlton was living in the Bronx, New York when he enlisted. Originally assigned to a desk job, Charlton volunteered for combat duty with Company C of the 24th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Infantry Division. On June 2, 1951, Charlton's platoon commander was wounded and evacuated from the field. Charlton took command of the unit's assault against Hill 543 and knocked out two enemy positions. Even though he had suffered a serious wound, Charlton led a third charge to capture the hill. Without regard for his own safety, he personally attacked the last enemy position on the other side of the hill. Fatally wounded by a grenade, Charlton struggled onward and single handedly took out the enemy. As a result of his indomitable courage, superb leadership, and gallant self sacrifice, Sergeant Charlton was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Private First Class Thompson enlisted in the army in 1945 at the young age of 18. His address at time of enlistment was the Home for Homeless Boys in the Bronx. Thompson was described by his friends as being helpful and cheerful but few if any of his friends believed he could succeed as a soldier. However, he proved them all wrong. On August 2, 1951 near Haman, Korea, enemy forces mounted a surprise attack on Pfc. Thompson's unit. Acting quickly and decisively, Thompson set up his machine gun in the path of the onslaught and pinned down the enemy, giving his unit time to withdraw to a more tenable position. Although hit repeatedly by enemy fire, he continued to return fire until he was mortally wounded by an enemy grenade. Thompson's dauntless courage and gallant self sacrifice saved the lives of many in his unit and earned him a posthumous Congressional Medal of Honor.

What makes the stories of these two men so outstanding is the fact they were African Americans fighting for a country that refused to fight for them. These two men epitomized every characteristic we expect our soldiers to possess: selflessness, dignity, courage and honor.

Mr. Speaker, fortunately, there is a group of dedicated veterans, the Friends of Charlton Garden, who are working tirelessly to preserve the memory of these fallen heroes in the Bronx by establishing a memorial park aptly named the Charlton-Thompson Korean War Veterans Memorial. I am proud of the work that the Friends of Charlton Garden are doing to ensure this monument stands as a symbol of gratitude to the selfless acts of heroism displayed by all of our fallen soldiers, and I know in my heart that we as a legislative body must do more to supplement their good works. I'm

sure that the Friends of Charlton Garden would agree that we can build no monument large or grand enough to honor the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice for this country. The closest we can come to repaying these soldiers is to work to ensure that the world knows war no more. As idealistic and impossible as it may seem it is what their souls cry out for. So, Mr. Speaker, it is what I will continue to work for and it is what I ask my colleagues to work for. Surely, there can be no greater monument to our soldiers than peace.

HONORING THE LIFE OF SISTER DOROTHY STANG

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I am an original co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 89, legislation to honor a truly distinguished native of the city of Dayton, which I represent in Congress, Sister Dorothy Stang.

Sister Stang was brutally murdered in Brazil on February 12. She was a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur, and had moved to the Amazon region of Brazil 22 years ago to help impoverished families in the Amazon learn how to engage in sustainable farming, and help them in their struggle for land rights. It was while she was working for the poor that she was murdered. It was as Sister Stang was traveling to a meeting of impoverished farmers that two gunmen approached her. Sister Stang read from the Bible to the gunmen, who nevertheless shot her several times.

Sister Stang's commitment to the poor, her quest for fair treatment of those who felt they did not have a voice, and her belief in the power of faith serve as an example from which we all can draw valuable lessons. It is fitting that the House of Representatives will vote today to draw the attention of the Congress and our Nation to the life of this selfless and inspirational woman.

HONORING THE 70TH BIRTHDAY OF ROBERT HEDGER

HON. STEVE ISRAEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to send the Congress's birthday wishes to Robert Hedger on the occasion of his 70th birthday celebration. Father to Matthew, Sarah, Adam, Douglas and Stephen—a valuable member of my personal staff—and grandfather to Allison, Jonathon, Samuel, Kristina and Sarah, Robert has brought a wonderful family into this world. I offer my best wishes for continued good health and good fortune for he and his family and for many more gatherings such as that which he will hold this Memorial Day weekend when he will be surrounded by his loved ones at his home in Corea, Maine.

HONORING THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INDIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION (NFIA)

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise on the House floor this evening to highlight the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA). NFIA is an umbrella organization for over 200 associations, all of which represent the 2.2 million Americans of Indian origin.

Since the establishment of NFIA in 1980, the organization has served the Indian American community at the local, State and national level, by protecting the basic civil rights of Indian Americans and by promoting their rich cultural heritage. NFIA is a secular organization that accepts membership from all Indian Americans, irrespective of religious, regional, ethnic, professional or political affiliation. In addition to representing and encouraging political participation by Indian Americans, NFIA is also active in promoting strong relations between the United States and India.

NFIA is very active in the area of raising funds for natural disasters, both in the U.S. and India, and has funded many charitable projects. NFIA holds biennial conventions in various parts of the country to discuss, deliberate, and debate the contemporary issues facing the community. Lastly, NFIA conducts annual receptions on Capitol Hill in an effort to strengthen long-lasting relationships with Members of the House and Senate and to advance its agenda on behalf of Indian Americans and U.S.-India relations.

In closing Mr. Speaker, I would like to honor the National Federation of Indian American Associations (NFIA) for its dedicated service.

BAKASSI PENINSULA

HON. CHRIS CHOCOLA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker I would like to share with my colleagues a situation that has been brought to my attention. An October 2002 ruling by the International Court of Justice affirmed that the disputed Bakassi Peninsula belongs to The Republic of Cameroon. I urge the nations of Cameroon and Nigeria to act in accordance with this ruling and move expeditiously to withdraw Nigerian troops and delineate the final border. Continued talks between the two parties are greatly encouraged, and it is my hope they will lead to an effective resolution.

CONGRATULATING THE NAPERVILLE BASEBALL ASSOCIATION ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. JUDY BIGGERT

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Naperville Baseball Association

on its 50th anniversary and to thank its members for their enduring commitment to youth athletics throughout the Naperville community.

The Naperville Baseball Association is an institution that, for a half-century, has provided local children with a fun, safe way to play organized baseball. The association will be honored as part of "Naperville Baseball Day" on June 3, celebrating "baseball at its best for the past 50 years."

As a mother and a grandmother, I fondly recall my days of shepherding kids to and from various youth sporting events in my station wagon. As a former youth soccer coach, I remember trying to balance winning while ensuring that all the kids got a chance to play and have fun.

Each year as spring rolls around, kids across America grow excited with anticipation for baseball season. They come to the field hoping to emulate their big league idols, while their parents line the stands, anxious to see their son morph into the next Mickey Mantle or Ernie Banks, slamming the ball out of the park. After games, parents and kids, coaches and teammates, all congratulate one another and often celebrate over pizza or heaping scoops of ice cream. Mr. Speaker, this is youth baseball at its very best.

As our national pastime, baseball holds a special place in the hearts of so many Americans. For generations, families have bonded over hot dogs and Cracker Jack at Wrigley Field, Comiskey Park, and other legendary cathedrals of summer. But as vital as these familial baseball bonds are to encouraging a love of the game, organized baseball also remains an excellent resource for teaching invaluable life skills like teamwork, friendship, and sportsmanship.

The Naperville Baseball Association has promoted this vision of pure, timeless baseball for more than 50,000 children over its 50-year history. I am proud to add my voice to the many who wish to say thanks, and I am confident they will keep up the good work for at least another 50 years.

HONORING THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 21ST ANNUAL PROSECUTORS' OFFICE AWARDS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 26, 2005

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the recipients of the 2005 Prosecutors' Office Awards. These remarkable individuals have helped build a safer community through their faithfulness and perseverance while on duty. The following are this year's awards and recipients.

A Commendation for Valor is awarded to an officer for an extraordinary act of outstanding courage, without regard for personal safety, while in actual combat with an armed and dangerous perpetrator. This year a Commendation for Valor will be awarded to the following people: Officer Shay Sampson; Officer Melva Moss; Officer Buddy Camp.

A Commendation for Heroism is awarded to an officer for an act of outstanding courage, without regard for personal safety, which results in the saving of a life, or the futile attempt to save a life. A Commendation for Heroism may also be awarded to an officer who